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## RECOLLECTIONS OF AUBREY DE VERE.<sup>1</sup>

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL reminiscences have to many minds, apart from their subject-matter, an attraction of their own. In our later years we are still apt to echo the childish entreaty, "Tell me what happened when you were a little boy," and the story told in the first person has been adopted by writers of fiction as carrying with it a sense of reality which could not otherwise be obtained. This accounts for the success of records differing as widely as the "Greville Memoirs," Pierre Loti's "Roman d'un Enfant," the "Récit d'une Sœur" and Newman's "Apologia," amongst readers for whom the story they have to tell might have been supposed to possess but little interest. It is often in fact not so much a question of the story as of the story-teller; but even if we knew nothing of Mr. de Vere, these chapters of recollections would have an interest and a charm. They date almost from the beginning of the century, they are concerned with many of its most prominent names in literature, full of persons and yet free from trivial or ungenerous personalities, a pleasant stream of memories babbling over the stones of the past, bringing with it a sense of freshness, a wholesome scent of summer fields and breezy uplands. For Aubrey de Vere could never have been numbered either for good or ill amongst the children of the world. He has indeed been enrolled amongst its citizens and had many friends amongst its votaries, he has been well acquainted with its language and conformed to its usages; but his habitual dwelling has been in a region of wider horizons, where high ideals are not dwarfed by present exigencies nor poetical aspirations sacrificed to the demands of business or pleasure. Of the stress and strain of official life he has indeed had no experience; the tasks which he has accomplished have been set by himself, and he has been a persistent rather than a strenuous worker. Leisure indeed he has had in full measure; a fruitful

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<sup>1</sup> London and New York: Edward Arnold. 1897. 8vo, pp. 374.

leisure, free from the hurry of competition or the fever of undertakings necessarily accomplished at high pressure and compressed into stated times. His observations are frequently made from the vantage ground of the spectator, and indeed with regard to some of the concerns of life he is in the position of a man who has studied the rules of a game which he has not had occasion to put into practice, but in matters upon which his imagination has been employed he has had not only a fine appreciation, but a wide and varied range.

Brought up in the seclusion of an Irish country home, Curragh Chase, Adare, roaming from earliest childhood about its wide lawns and pastures and through its noble woods, a portion of ancient Ireland's primeval forest, his love for nature in her varying moods was awakened and strengthened as the years passed on by ample opportunities for intimate knowledge and sympathetic observation. "No change was desired by us," he writes, "and little came. The winds of early spring waved the long masses of daffodils till they made a confused though rapturous splendor in the lake close by, just as they had done the year before; and those who saw the pageant hardly noted that those winds were cold. Each spring the blackbird gave us again his rough strong note, and the robins as the season advanced gained a roundness and fullness like that of the thrush. Each year we watched the orderly succession of the flowers, and if the bluebell or the cowslip came a little before or after its proper time, we felt as much aggrieved as the child who misses the words he was accustomed to in the story heard a hundred times before. Each spring there came again the contented cooing of the wood doves far away, and that tremulous pathos of the young lamb's bleat, which hardly seemed in harmony with his gladness as he bounded over the pastures illuminated by the sudden April green. Each year the autumn replaced the precipitate ardors of the spring with graver joys and more sedate fruitions. . . . The maple as of old relinquished its fires, and there was the falling leaf and the frightened flutter of the poplar's gilded

tablets, in place of the thickening leaves and deepening shadows of the verdant woodlands; but beyond these woodlands a remoter landscape was once more seen through clearer air." We quote the passage because in every adjective it bears witness to the fidelity of his descriptive powers and very charmingly portrays the sincerity of an affection which upon the next page he urges us to cherish since "Nature is a very disinterested benefactress—she gives much and demands little; she touches the human heart with a hand of air so light that it leaves behind no burden of responsibility. . . . For that reason a wise man should put a finer edge upon his appreciation of nature than on most of his sensibilities."

But long before he was capable of reasoning upon the subject he put his own precept into practice, and so it comes to pass that both in prose and poetry his fancy wings some of its happiest flights through the realm of nature with an easy and spontaneous movement which shows that he finds himself thoroughly at home there.

This love of nature was inherited. His father, Sir Aubrey de Vere, was not only a dramatist, but an accomplished landscape gardener, and in the case of his sons, brought up at home under the care of private tutors, there were not many of the interests and occupations of the ordinary schoolboy to thrust it into the background.

It was a time of transition, but modern habits and ideas had hardly as yet made their way into remote country districts. There were curious remnants of the feudal state; the people in the extreme of poverty were patient, and often merry; there was great familiarity in the intercourse of classes, and yet what would now seem like great ostentation on the part of the rich. Lady de Vere, the poet's grandmother, drove about her own park with four grays and an outrider, and yet what are now looked upon as ordinary comforts of life were unattainable luxuries. His grandfather, the most popular of country gentlemen, with a great love for the poor, was an adventurous and unlucky person who lost £15,000 at cards before he renounced them, and by chance

strolling into a London auction room one day to find Lundy Island, in the Bristol Channel, put up for sale, made a bid upon the spur of the moment, and had the island knocked down to him. Here he planted a small Irish colony, and made the speculation answer by the sale of rabbits, and retired there to meditate when he had had a quarrel with his neighbors. It was an age when quarrels were of more account than they are now, a duel was the most "mirthful of pastimes," vindictiveness was not merely a point of honor, but of conscience, and the duty of revenge was handed down from generation to generation. Faction fights were of frequent occurrence, and reconciliations, conducted with great solemnity, were hardly brought about even under the powerful influence of O'Connell, who, with the aid of the parish clergy, induced some to renounce their ancient enmities, and shake hands in their parish church. Mr. de Vere relates how a relative of his own, on entering a church by chance, found a great crowd assembled, and two gray-haired heads of rival parties advancing slowly toward one another, till, standing silent face to face, their hands met. The next moment one of them dashed himself down on the stone pavement, and cried aloud: "O my son, my murdered son! I have clasped the hand that shed the last drop of thy blood." Equally representative of the spirit of the time is his recollection of an old friend and neighbor of his father's walking up and down the library at Curragh, with his hands locked behind him and his head bent low as he ejaculated: "It is a great thing to be able to look back on a long life and record, as I can, that never once did any man injure me but sooner or later I had my revenge." One can well imagine with what a shock the words must have fallen upon the gentle and magnanimous spirit of a youth who throughout his life was never known to resent an injury nor cherish the remembrance of a wrong. The home life of domestic peace with parents who had not only high aims but cultivated tastes had been preëminently one to foster such a spirit, and their son was ready and open to receive impressions, though by no

means one of those precocious children to whom learning is made easy. He was indeed so slow at his Latin for a boy of ten years old, that his tutor—himself a fine classical scholar—desired him to discard it altogether, inasmuch as he was an idiot. “I asked him what, that being the case, I was to do; to which he replied that I might cultivate the moral faculties, since I had not the intellectual, and also make tracteries of maps, laying them level upon glass. I asked next whether the moral faculties or the intellectual were the better; to which he replied that the moral were, seeing that good men took such with them to heaven; whereas the intellectual underwent some strange revolution after death—an answer which entirely contented me.” His cheerful acquiescence in his tutor’s verdict curiously corroborates the opinion to which one of his closest friends gave expression in later years, that he had no vanity by which it was possible to hurt him, yet we can hardly believe that he had not before long found reason in his own mind to distrust his tutor’s judgment. At any rate, by the time that he was following his undergraduate course at Trinity College, Dublin, he had discovered that his chief delight lay in intercourse with one of the greatest intellects of the day, Sir William Rowan Hamilton, Astronomer Royal in the Dublin University, of whom he writes: “One’s first impression was that he was a great embodied intellect rather than a human being.” On entering the university, Sir William had sent in an essay written in fourteen or fifteen different languages, and at the age of twenty-two had published a book which was declared to have “made a new science of mathematical optics.” It is of him that Mr. de Vere quotes Wordsworth as saying one night, as the two poets stood beside the latter’s little domestic lake: “I have known crowds of clever men, as every one has; not a few of high abilities, and several of real genius; yet I have only seen one whom I should call wonderful—Coleridge.” He then added: “But I should not say that, for I have known one other man who was wonderful also—Sir William Rowan Hamilton, and he was singularly like Coleridge.” This, then, was the chosen friend

and companion of the young undergraduate, nearly ten years his junior, and a transcendental philosophy and speculative trilogy and the metaphysics of the time were their varied themes. It was not a time when men approached such subjects lightly. One feels that the air must have been somewhat too heavily charged with speculative thought when Sir William Hamilton can tell the following story of his five or six year old child who ran up and questioned him about the doctrine of the Trinity. “‘How,’ he demanded, ‘can there be three, and yet only one?’ I answered: ‘You are too young for such matters; go back to your top.’ He flogged it about the passages a score of times, then returned to me and said: ‘I have found it all out—this is the explanation;’ and propounded his theory. ‘You are wrong,’ I answered; ‘you are too young to understand the matter; go and play.’ He returned three times more successively, and each time propounded a new explanation, and received the same answer. But now listen. His four explanations of the mystery were the four great heresies of the first four centuries! He discovered them all for himself. I did not give him the slightest assistance. What an intellect!’” It is no wonder that children such as these found compound division and the Latin grammar unworthy of their attention.

Mr. de Vere’s recollections, however, even in this period of youth, are not of literary interests and philosophical studies only. It was a seething season of social disturbance. O’Connell, the Repeal of the Union, Catholic Emancipation were battle cries which reached the ears even of those farthest removed by tastes or position from the ranks of political agitators. The traditional politics of the de Veres were those of liberal Toryism. They were animated by a single-minded regard for the highest interests of their country, and would have sacrificed much to secure them; but several of the family at least were rather fitted to be leaders of thought than leaders of men; the sea of political trouble could not sweep them off their feet, though they might not be strong enough to stem it. “We sit in a boat, the gunwale of which

is level with the water," Sir Aubrey used to say. "How will it be when the waves rise?"

The waves rose in the famine of 1847-50, "the year of sorrow" of one of Mr. de Vere's most striking poems. Of the helpless suffering and the mob terrorism, as well as of the light-hearted heroism and flashes of mother wit, which now and again lightened the blackness of the tragedy he has in these pages and in letters written at the time given us many graphic descriptions. It was a time to awaken all the dormant practical energies of a family which had ever made their home in Ireland amongst their own dependents. Sir Aubrey had not lived to see his own forebodings fulfilled, but his eldest son, Sir Vere, was foremost in carrying out the measures of the government too often mistaken or inadequate for the relief of the people; and Aubrey, the dreamer, the visionary, was to be seen in altogether a new character, haranguing an infuriated mob of several thousand from the top of a wall, and reducing them to order without the aid of the military, advancing to meet an armed party making their way to the house and summarily demanding the dismissal of the steward which he as summarily refused, though as often as he drew near in the endeavor to identify the rioters, six guns were pointed at his head. Not, it is true, as they assured him, with any desire to kill him, nor out of any want of respect for the family, but merely to testify to their determination to shoot the steward. In all such cases his imperturbable good temper and self-possession proved of more avail than any intimidating display of force, though this fact is modestly slurred over even in letters to his most intimate friends.

His brother Stephen, the present baronet, animated by the same humane and patriotic spirit, took up the cause of the emigrants who, in 1847, reached the extraordinary number of 215,444 within the year. The voyage to the United States in sailing vessels lasted six weeks, and was an experience of terrible suffering from insufficient accommodation and privations which had as their consequence an immense mortality. It was Stephen de Vere who procured the redress of



their grievances by a personal act of self-sacrifice. He embarked on an emigrant ship, sharing all the horrors and perils of a crowded steerage passage, so dreadful in its results that when they reached Quebec nearly all his poor companions, though then lodged in a large and healthy house, fell victims to the fever which they had contracted upon the ship, and there he remained for eight months rendering to them the services of a hospital nurse and the devoted care of a brother until he was able to return to England and lay an accurate report, based upon personal experience, before the public and Parliament. His letter was read by Lord Grey, then Secretary for the Colonies, before the House of Lords, and the evil was redressed, though not before the deaths on the voyage to Canada alone had risen to sixty in the thousand.

It is certainly interesting to see the heroic spirit manifesting itself under very different circumstances and in diverse manners in these brothers. Horace, the youngest, the soldier, served with distinction in the Crimean war, and came home to be struck down in the meridian of life and happiness by a chance as strange as it was unexpected. He was shot as he stood upon parade from a window of the barracks at Chatham by one of his own soldiers whom he had reprimanded for some misconduct. The bullet pierced his lungs and he died in a few weeks. "He bore his sufferings with cheerfulness, and often with gayety. He entirely forgave his murderer, and a little before his death he said: 'Take me out into the barrack court and lay me there. A soldier should die in the open air.' "

But though some events of sufficient importance to change the tenor of his life are recorded, Mr. de Vere has dwelt for the most part in a still and sunny region, a land of meditative peace to which the sounds of the stress and struggle of warring interests and rival passions come softened by the distance. It is here that his poetry was written, here that he conceived the high and lofty themes which have inspired his verse, here that he found leisure to cultivate his mind and mature his natural gifts. Of himself, indeed, we hear but

too little as he calls up the visions of the past. One short chapter only is devoted to his poetry, and it is chiefly an exposition of its aims and objects. It was when he was eighteen that he began to write poetry, a love and appreciation for it having been fostered from his earliest years. At one time he had read Byron and little else for a month; but shortly after, becoming acquainted with Shelley, Keats, Landor, Coleridge, and Wordsworth, they obtained a mastery over his imagination, which was stronger and more enduring. "I read 'Laodamia,' " he writes, "standing to the last line, and was converted. I seemed to have got upon a new and larger planet, with

'An ampler ether, a diviner air,  
And fields invested with purpureal gleams.'

Shelley's poems were read by night to the sound of an Æolian harp, or soothed his vagrant spirit as he lay all night in a floating boat upon the lake, until the summer sunrise broke upon his waking dreams. For with the young, as Wordsworth himself has told us, poetry is like love, a passion; but, in spite of the Æolian harp and moonlit vigils, of love poetry pure and simple there is not a large proportion even in Mr. de Vere's earliest writings, and it is curious to observe that his poems were then often cast in the form of the sonnet, a condensed form which requires, as has been said, "the implements of a sculptor," and has been generally rejected by youthful writers as imposing a too mechanical restraint upon the exuberance of their imagination. This is not the place for a criticism of the volumes to which he has been adding even until the present time, but the subjects which he has chosen and those he has forsworn are too significant of the bent of his mind not to be noted.

"Inisfail," one of his earlier poems, of which he says, "no other was written more intensely, I may say more painfully, from my heart," was a chronicle poem illustrating Irish annals from the Norman Conquest to the repeal of the penal laws, and it was designed to bear testimony to his own deep and unalterable conviction that Ireland, like Israel of old, had a spiritual vocation. The "Legends of St. Pat-

rick," in themselves so rich in dramatic incident and Christian lore, fill another volume, whilst his two dramas, "Alexander the Great" and "St. Thomas of Canterbury," were written with a kindred aim. Each was to be a philosophical poem as well as a drama, illustrating the one the greatness of the pagan, and the other that of the Christian, ideal. Then we have the poems dealing with Grecian art and mythology, of which Landor wrote with such generous appreciation in the lines addressed to him:

Make thy proud name yet prouder for thy sons,  
Aubrey de Vere!  
.  
Come, reascend with me the steepes of Greece  
With firmer foot than mine; none stop the road,  
And few will follow; we shall breathe apart  
That pure fresh air and drink the untroubled spring.  
Lead thou the way; I knew it once; my sight  
May miss old marks; lend me thy hand; press on;  
Elastic is thy step, thy guidance sure.

But though foreign lands and themes may have their charm, we always feel that Mr. de Vere comes back with gladness to the soil of his native land so fruitful in acts of Christian faith and heroism, the soil upon which he loves best to trace the footsteps of the saints.

There is then a large proportion of poems of which the themes are religious and patriotic; they are inspired by a personal religion so sincere and spiritual that it must needs permeate every feeling, and a patriotism so pure and disinterested as to rise above partisan prejudices and factious passions; but we have also many examples of lyrics and songs written in lighter measures, but not less rich in flights of fancy and felicities of diction, and full of most true and delicate pictures of the natural world. It would convey an altogether wrong impression to say that Mr. de Vere is, to use an expression of his own,

Colder and calmer than a sacred well,

but his is the strength of suppressed passion dignified and controlled, and the upward flame of his poetic ardor burns bright and strong, undisturbed by adverse currents. There

is indeed a moral elevation even in the delineation of the most transient emotions, and Sir Henry Taylor's lines are as true as when they were first written, half a century ago:

Flowers were they that were planted by the Muse,  
In a deep soil which the continual dews  
Of blessing had enriched; no lesser light  
Than what was lit in Sidney's spirit clear,  
Or given to saintly Herbert's to diffuse,  
Now lives in thine, de Vere.

It is a difficult thing for a man to write about his own personal religion; and, indeed, Mr. de Vere hardly makes the attempt, though he devotes a chapter to the account of his "submission to the Catholic Church." It is a modest and simple narrative, and, though the method of reasoning and the sequence of events may not be altogether intelligible to the ordinary reader, he can scarcely fail to perceive that the underlying motive was that disinterested desire to apprehend the highest truth; that reaching after perfection to which his whole nature, moral, intellectual, and spiritual, had been devoted from his earliest years. He himself has told us that "the deepest still is single," and in quoting a saying of Walter Savage Landor that "the thoughts of a true man should stand as naked as the statues of the god of light," he adds that Landor "might have added a converse assertion—namely, that a man's most sacred feelings should be often shrouded in a dimness like that of the same god's Delphic laurel grove." It was perhaps for this reason that, though he had many friends amongst the converts in those troubled days of the Tractarian movement, notably Cardinal Newman and Archbishop Manning, both to the end of their lives his loved and venerated friends, personal influence at this turning point in his life seems to have had comparatively little to do with his conclusions. He names as his chief teachers Bacon, St. Thomas Aquinas and Coleridge, and it is easy to perceive the justice of his assertion that imaginative sympathies in this respect exercised but little influence upon his mind. He had been a student of theology from his youth, and his friendship with various leaders of religious thought naturally directed his studies and fixed his at-

tention upon the controversies of the day. From the date of his conversion in 1851 he becomes ever more and more the poet of the Roman Church, not only in his records of mediæval saints, but as the exponent of her doctrines and her spirit.

Nevertheless, the interest of his recollections is not mainly theological, it is not a religious biography, though religion, poetry, art, and lastly politics (upon which we have no space to enter) all have a place in it. It is above all a collection of portraits, a picture gallery in which, in his declining years it is evident that Mr. De Vere loves to linger, for it is filled with portraits of those dead friends of whom he has written.

O gentle Death, how dear thou makest the dead!

There are some spaces upon the walls which we should have liked to see filled. His memories of Tennyson are incorporated in the latter's life, and so find no place in this volume, but why have we not more about some of those eminent or interesting people with whom he was well acquainted? The Brownings, Landor, Father Faber, Leigh Hunt, Coventry Patmore, to mention only a few names out of many. We have indeed two chapters devoted to personal recollections of Cardinal Newman and Archbishop Manning. Of Newman he says: "What men felt most in him was his extreme though not self-engrossed personality. . . . Silence and stillness but kindled more the interior fires and a narrow limit increased their force. His nature one

Built on a surging subterranean fire,  
That stirred and lifted him to high attempts."

And again: "In Newman there existed the rare union of the contemplative mind and the heroic soul. Otherwise he might have pointed out its way to another generation; but he would not have led forth the pilgrimage." Then of Manning, whom he met first in 1849, with whom he stayed in the rectory at Lavington discoursing upon theological and poetical themes, discussing Dante, of whom the host said: "There is no poetry like Dante's; it is St. Thomas Aquinas put into verse!" until from those early days the friendship between them was cemented rather than weakened by the

chances and changes of life, by the intimacies incidental upon foreign travel in each other's company, by the promotion to the Archbishopric of Westminster, when the future Archbishop writes: "My dearest Aubrey, . . . you were one of the first I thought of when this thing came on me, and I wish I could see you."—and ten years later from Rome in the year of the Council, "I wish you were here with me," and so on through the last years of his life; though in the sphere of action, if not of thought, no two people could have been farther apart than the poet in his seclusion and the busy ecclesiastic in the thronging life of the great city. The chapters devoted to these two great men are full of interest, and emphasize our complaint that we do not find some others whose names we looked for in these pages. We regret it all the more since the portraits he has given us, though often mere sketches, are touched with such a true and delicate hand as to give us a more real impression of the person than many a more finished and elaborate drawing. Let us take a few at random. O'Connell, whom he first met on board the steamer at Kingstown, where he observed a large strong man, whose face I at once "recognized, though I had never seen it before. There it was, the eye potent, but crafty too, the large mouth, full at once of humor and good humor, a broad strong forehead, well adapted for thinking purposes, but better still apparently for butting against opponents, or pushing his way through them. His bearing had a singular confidence about it; and he wore, slightly on one side, an arrogant little sailor's cap with a good deal of gold lace about it. It was O'Connell: I was certain of this when he spoke." Then we have specimens of O'Connell's humor, his familiar banter with the steward, his subsequent kindness to two little girls in the railway carriage when he told them stories and repeated poems by Moore and Byron until there were tears not only in their eyes but in his own; and here we have a picture of the great agitator's life taken somewhat from a new point of view. Take again his recollections of that poor vagrant genius, Hartley Coleridge "a white-haired apparition—wearing in all other re-

spects the semblance of youth—with the most delicately grained and tinted skin and vividly bright eyes. He could hardly be said to have walked, for he seemed with difficulty to keep his feet on the ground, as he wavered about near us with arms extended like wings. . . . There seemed to be no gravitating principle in him. One might have thought he needed stones in his pockets to prevent his being blown away. . . . Touchingly reverent when referring to religious subjects,” and in reading, when he came to the name of God, it “seemed as if he could hardly pronounce it.” Such a singular combination of high ideals and disastrous frailties, with a vein of humor intersecting moods of profoundest melancholy, was certain to be touched by Mr. de Vere with a tender and sympathetic hand, and one cannot but be glad to hear that that wrecked and wasted life never forfeited the affection of those who knew him best, and was now and again lightened by the exuberant gayety of a child. Mr. de Vere tells us how, on one occasion, being asked to meet an Irish enthusiast who went about the country enlightening people’s minds on the subject of popish errors, Hartley after dinner asked to be presented to a man so remarkable, and taking his arm whilst a few guests gathered around addressed him with solemnity: “Sir, there are two great evils in Ireland.” “There are indeed, sir,” replied the Irish guest, “but please to name them.” “The first,” resumed Hartley, “is — popery!” “It is,” said the other; “but how wonderful that you should have discovered that! Now tell me what is the second great evil!” “Protestantism!” was Hartley’s reply in a voice of thunder as he ran away screaming with laughter.

All the eminent inhabitants of the Lake district were well known to Aubrey de Vere. He was a familiar guest at Rydal Mount, and he gives many interesting accounts of his long walks and talks with Wordsworth, for whom his reverence was that of a son and a disciple. One can well believe that it was in the open air, amongst the scenes to which he owed so much of his poetic inspiration, that the old poet most naturally revealed himself. “In the presence of Na-

ture he seemed to be always either conversing with her as a friend, and watching her changeful moods, or sometimes wrapped like a prophet in mystic attention to her oracles."

With the Lake country, and especially with Derwentwater, are associated Mr. de Vere's recollections of Sara Coleridge, of whom he quotes the saying that "her father had looked into her eyes and left in them the light of his own." "Her great characteristic," he adds, "was the radiant spirituality of her intellectual and imaginative being. . . . She moved with the lightest step when she ranged over the highest ground. Her feet were beautiful on the mountains of ideal thought."

In 1843-44 again we have the record of his travels with his friend and brother poet, Henry Taylor, of whom, after an intimacy extending much over forty years, he writes: "His most marked characteristic was magnanimity. He lived in a large world built up by justice and truth, and in him there was no small world; unlike another great man of whom it was said, 'inside that great man there lives a little man.'" And then, after a description of which every word breathes of the affectionate friendship and no less sincere appreciation of a lifetime: "I could have wished to have written more at large of a character so rich in noble qualities, but this is needless, as the true greatness of a character depends less upon the number of its great qualities than on the genuine greatness of those few qualities which suffice for true greatness."

We have many slighter sketches of less well-known people. Augustus Stafford O'Brien, so eloquent in Parliament and so much sought for in society, with a singular beauty of face and person, and of extraordinary brilliancy, versatility, and charm; who in the Crimea ministered so assiduously to the cholera-stricken crews upon the French ships, that in return they gratefully named him "le cher Monsieur Damne me," their name for an Englishman. Then we have Sir Edward O'Brien, the direct descendant of Brian, the great king of all Ireland; authoritative, good-natured, acute, with a simple respect for religion joined to a dislike



for controversy, and a fine determination to do things in his own way, but according to the traditions of his fathers, curiously illustrated by the following anecdote connected with Sir Aubrey de Vere: "One day as we sat after dinner over the wine and walnuts he remarked: 'I have just been thinking that this is the year I have to die in.' 'Nothing of the kind, Sir Edward. I never saw you better; you will probably live another dozen years.' Sir Edward was highly provoked. 'Do not say that, Sir Aubrey; the head of our family always dies at the age I have now reached. It is our way, and I don't want to change.' " Curiously enough he had his way (even with death), and died that year as he predicted.

But space does not allow of more extracts, and we must reluctantly close the volume. In compiling it Mr. de Vere has unlocked for us one of those drawers into which the young look with eager curiosity, and their elders with a tender interest not untouched by melancholy. Here are the letters of a bygone age, with their yellow paper carefully docketed and tied up with faded ribbon; here are the unconsidered trifles which once perhaps made or marred a life, signs and symbols of dead hopes and fears; here are the ghosts of old loves and of friendships and aspirations faithfully treasured to live once again in these records of the past. Here are many fragrant memories laid up as it were in lavender, that they may be to us in a lesser degree, as to Mr. de Vere, for "thoughts and for remembrance."

ELEANOR A. TOWLE.